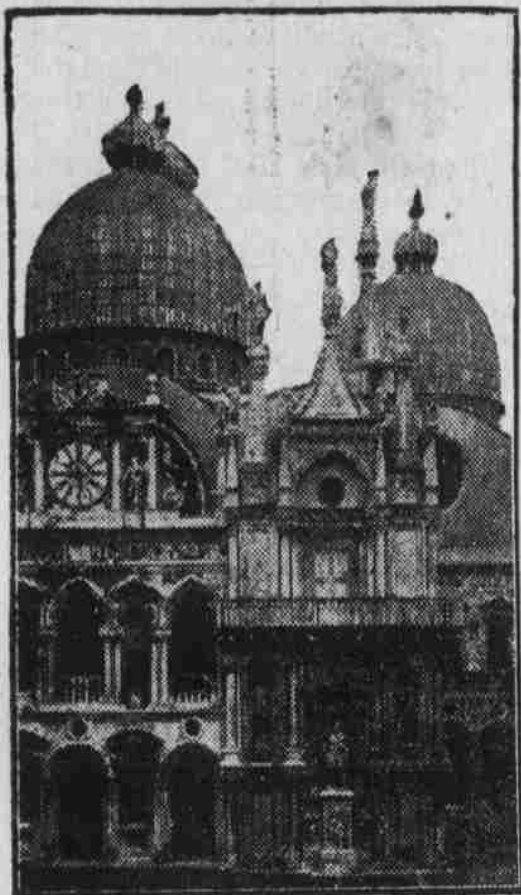


Famous Structure Decays

(Special Correspondence.)

One by one the ancient structures of Europe, after centuries of neglect, are falling into decay. Westminster abbey has fallen a victim to the gases of London, and is being repaired; the noble Alhambra, the monument left by the Moors as a legacy to Spain, has almost surrendered to the ravages of time and neglect; two years ago the majestic Campanile, in Venice, crumbled into dust in the Piazza San Marco, almost without warning, and now the glory of Venice, the beautiful blue-domed Church of San Marco, which was venerable even when the republic on the Adriatic was in the



Clock Tower.

heyday of its power, is found to be in danger of collapse.

The report of Prof. Manfredi and Signor Marangoni, recently submitted, gave some alarming information about the condition of St. Mark's. The greatest danger to this basilica is in the foundations, which have been constantly giving way in divers directions. All the walls show such cracking and weakening that it leads to the conclusion that under the magnificent dress of marble and mosaic is concealed the most alarming decrepitude. So bad is the condition of the vaults called the Paradise and Apocalypse that their complete and definite restoration is absolutely necessary. It is a miracle that they maintain their equilibrium.

That St. Mark's be preserved is no longer merely a question for Venice to answer, for artistically that glorious treasure belongs to the world. Who can conceive of a Venice without this grand old basilica, under which lie buried the remains of the lion-hearted saint in whose honor the edifice was raised? It is the loadstone of the Place or Piazza of St. Mark, and the Place of St. Mark, as Mr. Howells has told those of us who did not know it, is the heart of Venice.

Treasury of Art.

St. Mark's is more than a church; it is a treasury of art, for in the Middle Ages, when the fleets of the Venetians ruled the seas, in the days when Turks were to be fought in those religious wars known as Crusades, when the shores of the eastern Mediterranean were kept in order by the republic of the Adriatic, the choicest spoils from every sacked city or town were brought to Venice and added to the art treasures of St. Mark's. Of these, perhaps the most notable are the four antique bronze horses which ornament the facade. Each of them weighs a ton, and their origin is still unknown.

It is said that they were treasures of Alexandria, and were carried to Rome by Augustus after he defeated Marc Antony in 30 B. C. It is also said that five Roman emperors placed them

on as many triumphal arches in the Eternal City. That Constantine took them off to Constantinople to grace his hippodrome. It is definitely known, however, that when the Venetians sacked Constantinople, after the siege in the year 1203, the four horses were transported to Venice and set up on St. Mark's. When Napoleon was conquering Italy he, with his Dark Ages ideas, packed off the horses with such other treasures as his artistic taste dictated to Paris. From 1797 until 1815 the horses were in Paris, for with the eclipse of the first emperor the various countries he had plundered requested the return of the loot, and the king of France, whom they had restored to his throne, could not very well refuse.

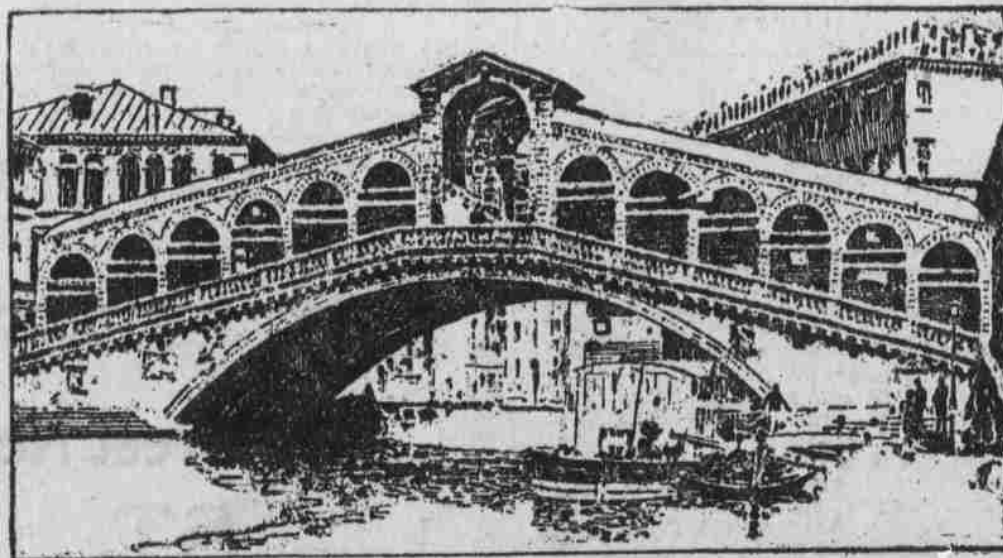
Familiar for Centuries.

The three cedar pill, or flagstaffs, which rise from the pavement of the square in front of the church to above the bronze horses, have been familiar objects for centuries. In the old days the banners of Cyprus, Candia and the Morea floated from them, recalling the victories of the Venetians, but now on Sundays and festivals the Italian colors float from them.

Another interesting object of the square is the clock of the Torre dell'Orologio, on the top of which two bronze figures of Moors strike a bell with each hour. The legend has it that one of these tollers of the hour is a murderer. Once upon a time a poor workman, unconscious that hour was about to be tolled, got within reach of one of the figures, and being struck with the swinging hammer was thrown to his death in the square below. The clock is not only a work of art, but gives a variety of information. Its dial is of blue and gold, and upon it are told not only the Italian hours, which run from one to twenty-four, but the quarters of the moon and the position of the twelve signs of the zodiac. On the upper story, above the dial, is a gigantic lion, and beneath it a gilded statue of the Virgin Mary. During the month of May, at certain hours, a door near this figure opens and the Magi appear, pass before her, salute her with their crowns and disappear by another door.

History of the Columns.

The columns of St. Mark's, like everything about the square, have their history. They form a sort of open door from the molo, and are the first objects which attract the stranger who enters Venice from the sea. There were originally three columns, brought from the islands of the archipelago in 1127, but one sank entirely out of sight and has never been recovered. For half a century the two laid on the shore, for no one

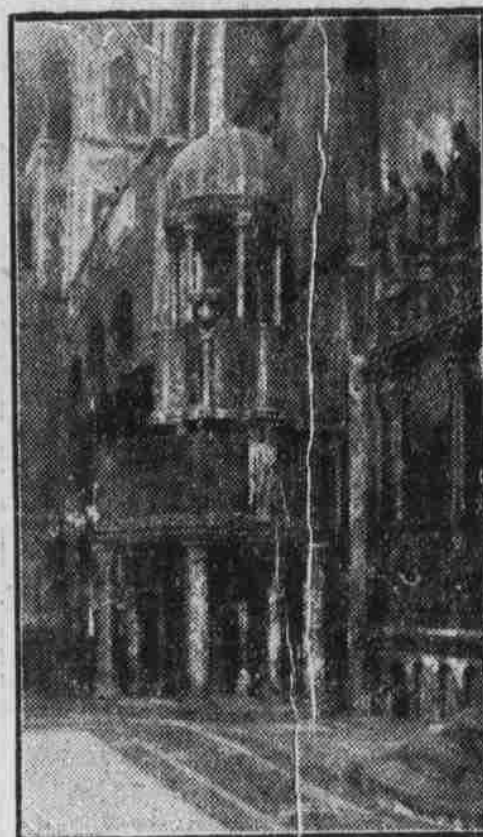


Famous Bridge of Sighs.

could raise them. Then the Doge Sebastian Giani promised to grant the request of anyone who would place them in position. A certain Niccolo, who was called "the blackleg," succeeded, and then requested the privilege of gambling between the columns, for it was forbidden in Venice.

This was allowed, and Niccolo was growing wealthy, to the scandal of the Venetians. Yet their word had been given, so, instead of annulling the privilege, it was ordered that henceforth all executions should take place between the columns. That destroyed the gambling monopoly, for henceforth it was considered a place of ill omen.

The treasures in St. Mark's itself would require a very considerable catalogue to merely suggest their variety and value. Begun in the year 830, the first church was destroyed by fire in 976. Subsequently it was rebuilt, and the building as we know it was consecrated in 1085. During its building every vessel that sailed to the East was obliged to bring a contribution for St. Mark's. Within it are more than 500 pillars of rare Oriental marbles and some of the finest Byzantine mosaics. Within the baptistry the mass of granite which forms



Pulpit, Cathedral of St. Mark.

the altar is said to be the stone on which Christ stood when he preached to the people of Tyre. The altar screen dates back to 1105, when it was brought from Constantinople. The high altar, with its bronze gates and marble columns, once adorned the Church of St. Sophia in Constantinople. There will also be found in St. Mark's the famous picture of the Virgin believed to have been painted by St. Luke.

Theological Criticism.

The Rev. Dr. Lyman Abbott's pronouncement as to the First Cause continues to be the leading theme of theological dispute, and no two of his critics agree in their interpretation of its exact meaning and significance. All of which recalls the old Scotch toast: "The new meenister. Sax days in the week he's invee-fible, and on the seventh he's incomprehensible."—Boston Herald (Ind.).

Not So Enjoyable.

Friend—Your wedding breakfast was a delightful affair.

KILLED BEAR WITH A ROCK.

Two Nevada Indians Had an Unpleasant Experience.

Two Indians were attacked by a large black bear on Berry creek in White Pine county, Nevada, yesterday, and after a desperate fight they succeeded in killing the enraged animal with a rock. The fight was unequal and the Indians were torn and cut in a terrible manner by the claws of the huge beast.

The bear was sleeping in the willows along the bank of the stream when the Indians, who were fishing, came upon it. The animal rushed at them with an angry growl and succeeded in knocking one of the Indians senseless with a blow of its paw.

The bear then closed with the other redskin and endeavored to draw him within reach of its open jaws. The Indian fought with great bravery, but was about to surrender to the beast when his companion regained consciousness and rushed to his aid with a large rock.

He struck the bear at the base of the skull and stunned it, and before it could recover crushed its skull with the rock.—San Francisco Call.

Remarkable English Clock.



A clock with moving figures showing the flagellation of Christ is on exhibition at London, England. The hour dial is at the feet of the captive, who is bound to a post surmounted by a rotating band, on which the quarter-hours are engraved. As the hour strikes, the scourges of the soldiers rise and fall.

Small Oxen.

One of the greatest curiosities among the domesticated animals of Ceylon is a breed of cattle known to the zoologist as the "sacred running oxen." They are the dwarfs of the whole ox family, the largest specimens of the species never exceeding 30 inches in height.

Walking Lizard.



Some lizards are able to walk upon their hind legs, of which the most remarkable example is the frilled lizard of Australia, a powerful form, which attains a length of about three feet. Should danger threaten, it scuttles off on its hind limbs with considerable speed for as far as thirty or forty feet in a half crouching attitude, with the fore limbs hanging down and the remarkable frill folded up.

Mr. Honeymoon (with a sigh)—Yes, but we've had others since.

The Strenuous Life.

Mama—He keeps us busy.
Papa—Yes, indeed. You can get all the exercise you need amusing a baby.